



Governor's Conference Wrap Up

A big thanks to everyone who participated in the 2002 Governor's Conference on Tourism and Recreation in West Yellowstone, April 18-19. This year's conference edged out the 1996 Kalispell event for the honor of most attendees with a new record of 528 people.

Travel Montana's staff hopes the speakers and break out sessions were interesting and useful. We have sent out an evaluation form for your feedback. Your comments will help us shape our next conference, which is slated for March 24-25, 2003, in Helena. If you were unable to make it to this year's event, many of the featured speakers' presentations are posted on our Intranet site: travelmontana.state.mt.us/conference.

The two-day event wrapped up with a Friday night banquet. Governor Judy Martz thanked the tourism industry for the important role it plays in Montana's economy and took the opportunity to review with attendees the key components of the Martz/Ohs tax plan. She called it "absolutely critical" that Montana continue to strengthen its tourism promotion efforts and she sees the tax plan as the means for generating more revenue as well as diversifying and stabilizing the state's tax base. "It is conducive to state government to ensure that your industry thrives so that we can ensure a stable base for critical government services." The governor also noted that the 10% income tax cut

would show a "direct benefit" to the pocket-books of many tourism businesses because most small businesses pay income taxes rather than corporate taxes.

Governor Martz reiterated that the overall goal of the proposal is "to generate a larger amount of revenue from nonresident visitors to our state while reducing the tax burden on our own residents, just as every state around us has done."

Governor Martz also joined the Montana Tourism Advisory Council at the conference in announcing the 2002 Montana Tourism Person and Community of the Year Awards.



Tourism Person of the Year

Don Sorensen of Virgelle was recognized for his commitment to preserve and promote cultural and recreational attractions in northcentral Montana. He purchased the dying agricultural community of Virgelle in the late 1970s and has developed it into a tourism destination. He owns the Virgelle Mercantile and Historic Bed & Breakfast, the Missouri River Canoe Company and an antiques business.

Community of the Year

Hardin was chosen as the Montana Community of the Year. The southeast Montana community was recognized for its

annual Little Big Horn Days that includes the classic 1860s Grand Ball, Custer's Last Stand Reenactment, the Trial of George Armstrong Custer and the Little Big Horn Days parade. The weeklong event draws thousands of visitors to the state and has received national and international press attention.

In addition, Terry Zee Lee of Billings was honored with a regional tourism award for her efforts to develop long-term tourism projects in her hometown.

Tourism Works for Montana

"Tourism—Good for Montanans—Good for Montana" is the slogan for the new public service announcement campaign that will air on Montana television and radio stations from May through August, 2002. The PSAs are intended to educate Montanans on the importance of tourism to the state. This will be the first time Travel Montana has embarked on this type of public education promotion.

This campaign came in response to a 2000 resident attitude survey conducted by the Institute for Tourism and Recreation Research (ITRR) at the University of Montana. The ITRR report showed that 74% of Montanans felt they had been exposed to "some" or "no" information on tourism's economic effects.

"We believe these PSAs will be a jumping-off point to begin to show Montanans that their tourism industry has a huge positive economic impact on their lives and their communities," said Betsy Baumgart, administrator for the Montana Department of Commerce promotion division. "Montana's tourism industry is a success story and we want to get the word out and let people know it is working for them."

continued

Did You Know?

- Various stories about Montana were featured in recent issues of *Home and Away* magazine, Northwest Airline's *Northwest Traveler* magazine, *Outside* magazine and *Women in the Outdoors* magazine.
- Montanameetings.com has a new look and feel. Check it out.
- A record number of 10,790 bowling teams are officially entered in the 2002 ABC National Bowling Tournament in Billings that runs from February to June.
- Travel Montana's Intranet site — travelmontana.state.mt.us has posted a new Press Room section that provides interesting travel facts, valuable links, and a tourism 101 PowerPoint presentation that can be used for public speaking engagements to educate Montanans about our state's tourism industry.

Montana hosted nearly 9.6 million nonresident visitors in 2001. These visitors spent \$1.75 billion on retail purchases, hotels and food in Montana's towns and cities. Tourism directly and indirectly supports 32,200 Montana jobs resulting in an annual personal income of \$533 million.

A Perfect Shot Montana Film Office News

The feature film *Northfork* began principal photography in the Glasgow area on April 22. The Montana Film Office has been working with the production for a little over two years. The film, set in the 1950s, will be shot entirely in and around Glasgow, Great Falls and Augusta.

Two national commercials have already been shot in Montana in 2002, and the summer production season is just starting to gear up. AT&T Wireless and Volkswagen both made use of Montana's winter scenery. The AT&T commercial shot on Georgetown Lake was aired multiple times during the 2002 Winter Olympics.

Sten Iversen and Michelle Much of the Film Office, along with Connie Kenney of the Butte-Silverbow Chamber of Commerce, also represented Montana at the Locations Trade Show in Los Angeles, April 12-14. This year the show was moved to Santa Monica in order to increase accessibility to the show for commercial producers.

It's All in Your Backyard

Travel Montana will unveil a new in-state television campaign that reminds Montanans that there are plenty of reasons to spend their

summer vacations in their own backyard this year. The campaign will run for five weeks beginning in early June. A combination of broadcast and cable television commercials will air in the state's five major television markets of Billings, Butte, Bozeman, Kalispell and Missoula and several key smaller markets.

Seven different commercials highlighting each of the six tourism regions have been produced. Virginia City, Makoshika State Park and Glacier National Park will all be featured.

"Although this campaign was in the planning stages well in advance of September 11th, it has turned out to be very timely," said Sarah Lawlor, Travel Montana's consumer marketing manager. "Montana is an incredibly diverse and interesting state and it is the goal of Travel Montana that this campaign will encourage Montanans to explore more of their surroundings and spend more of their tourism dollars in-state this summer."

Awards Granted

The City of Malta, Fort Belknap College, Lake County Community Development Corporation in Pablo, Corporation for the Northern Rockies in Livingston, Powell County Chamber of Commerce in Deer Lodge, Alcohol and Drug Services of Gallatin County in Bozeman and Hot Springs Artist Society in Hot Springs have been awarded a total of \$73,075 from the Montana Department of Commerce's Special Events Grant Program (SEGP) "bed tax" funds to assist in the promotion and implementation of tourism-related events. The seven SEGP recipients were selected from a pool of 35

applications submitted for funding.

"The state investment in these seven tourism-related events is part of our effort to enhance Montana's communities and strengthen the local and state economy," said Mark Simonich, director of the Department of Commerce, in approving the SEGP awards. "Each of these events represents an investment in the local economy as well as adding to Montana's appeal as a visitor destination and a great place to live."

The grants were awarded based on a 3-tier approach that ranks counties on the basis of lowest per capita income, slowest population growth and highest unemployment. In addition, funding levels are affected by what year in which the event was established.

Alternative accessible formats of this document will be provided to disabled persons on request.

Calendar of Events

May	
10-14	Society of American Travel Writers Western Chapter Meeting, Kelowna, British Columbia
15-18	Lufthansa (Italy) Fam Tour
17-20	Another One Bites the Dust Media Tour, Custer Country
25-29	Travel Industry Association (TIA) of America's International Pow Wow Trade Show, New Orleans, LA
June	
3-4	Tourism Advisory Council Meeting—Hamilton
7-11	Museum Meandering Media Tour—Yellowstone Country

For all of the latest Montana tourism industry information log on to Travel Montana's Intranet site:
travelmontana.state.mt.us.



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